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ABSTRACT

Intended to improve citizen understanding of the legislative process and to encourage active participation in that process, this booklet describes how the United States House of Representatives conducts its business and provides a viewers' guide to the proceedings of the House as they are transmitted via satellite and cable to over 10 million homes and schools. The booklet contains information on: (1) the introduction of televised Congressional proceedings; (2) what takes place on and behind the scenes, including a description of House officers and staff and the location of various persons and items on and off the House floor; (3) a typical day's House activities; (4) how a bill becomes a law, including a flow chart of this process; (5) how the voting system works; (6) how to decipher the special terminology of legislative debate; and (7) where to go for more information, including a description of how to get copies of bills and how to contact individual Representatives and Senators. Also provided are selected pictures and an explanation of the system of electric lights and bells used to inform Representatives of the status of proceedings on the floor. A 6-item annotated bibliography and a glossary of 67 key Congressional terms conclude the booklet. (Author/ESR)

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GAVEL TO GAVEL

A Guide To The Televised Proceedings of Congress

By Alan Green
and Bill Hogan

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THE ELECTRONIC EYE

The Merger of Technology and Democracy

It was the great American Revolution—the uprising uniting the 13 original colonies—that gave the United States its unique democratic form of government; now, more than 200 years later, a revolution of another sort is opening up the day-to-day processes and intricacies of this democracy to all American citizens.

It is the communications revolution, a technological insurrection that's stripping away old boundaries and providing Americans everywhere with instantaneous access to one another. Previously, that communication was limited to the town crier, the postal carrier, the telegraph wire, or the reach of the telephone lines crisscrossing the terrain. But now our messages—both audio and video—are sent skyward to satellites hovering above the equator, and subsequently beamed back to towns and cities across the nation.

This technology, which is opening new doors in science, medicine, arts, and entertainment, has also opened wide the doors behind which the

Members of the President's Cabinet are not permitted to appear on the floor of either House to answer questions.

United States Congress conducts its business. In the past, the actions of our elected representatives could be scrutinized firsthand only by those making the trek to Washington. (Others had to be content with wading through the carefully edited—even sanitized—pages of the *Congressional Record.*) Even then, the minimal time spent watching proceedings from the visitors' gallery provided little insight into the crucial processes that shape the course of our nation—and the course of our individual lives.

But now, with daily sessions of the House of Representatives transmitted, in their entirety, by satellite, cable television viewers across the nation can bring the legislative process clearly into view.

With 435 Members elected every two years, intricate procedures, and complex jargon, the House can seem as confusing as an unassembled jigsaw puzzle. In fact, it's really not that complicated: the legislative process is governed by a set of rules that can be learned, just as our lawmakers have learned them. Those basic rules—the building blocks upon which Congress constructs our laws—are outlined in this booklet. The rest of the story—the unfolding of countless dramas in the legislative arena—is there before you on the screen. It is the merger of communications and democracy . . . live, and clearly in focus.

THE BIG PICTURE

The How and Why of Cameras in the Chamber

On March 19, 1979, Representative Albert Gore of Tennessee stepped up to one of the microphones on the House floor and proclaimed the marriage of television and open debate. For Gore, who had the opportunity of being the first Member to deliver an address carried by cable television stations nationwide, opening up Congress to the watchful eye of the TV camera—and the American public—had the potential to "revitalize representative democracy."

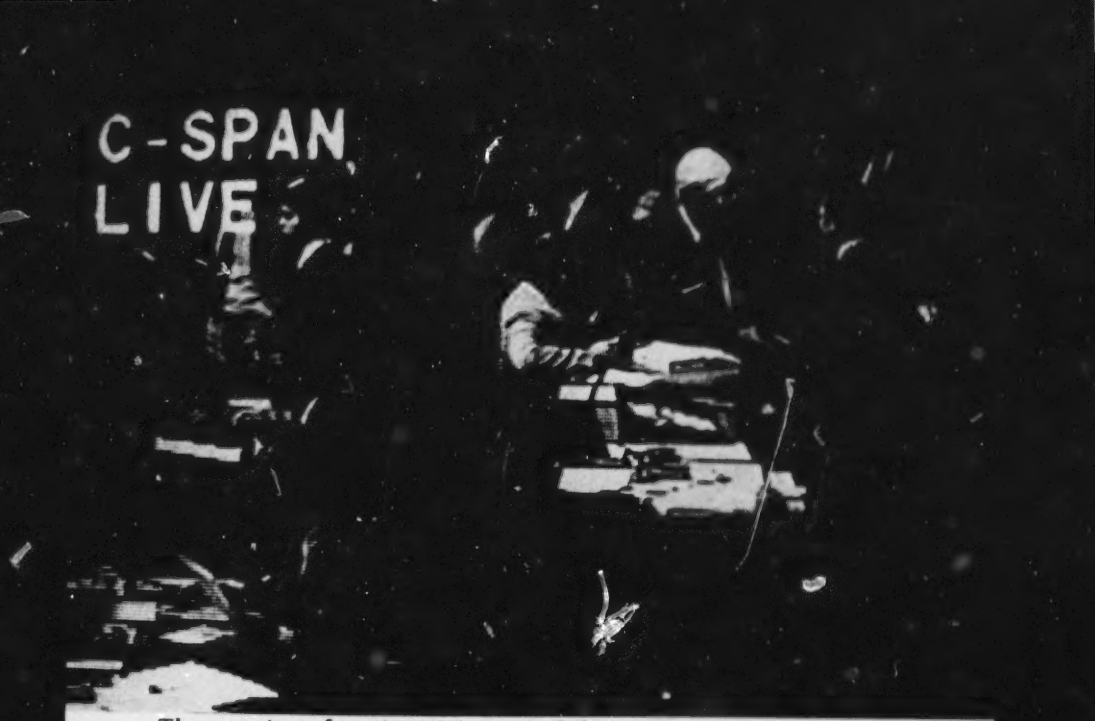
Actually, Gore's historic speech was not totally unprecedented: On January 3, 1947, the House agreed to let the TV cameras roll for part of its opening session, with the pictures seen only in Washington, Philadelphia, and New York. As President Truman looked on from the White House, Representative Charles A. Halleck of Indiana, the House Republican leader, spoke the first words during two hours of televised action. But then it was back to business as usual, with the only spectators occupying

Only once has the House convened in special session to honor a Senator: November 3, 1977, when special tribute was paid to Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota.

the seats in the galleries overlooking the Chamber.

The issue of allowing television a permanent place in the Congress was first debated in 1944—a time when radio was the dominant medium, color television was still being perfected, and nationwide TV networks were barely in their infancy. Nothing in the House rules specifically prohibited the televising of floor action, but the forces opposed to bringing legislative proceedings into the nation's living rooms consistently prevailed.

The arguments against cameras in the Chamber ranged from philosophical to technical considerations: Not only would Members be inclined to "ham it up" for the audience, it was argued, but the additional lighting required to insure sharp images would be an uncomfortable, disruptive factor. The lighting problem ultimately was solved with technological advances in camera equipment, and the House leadership, which had resisted the calls for televising debate, succumbed to the wishes of the majority in 1977. The following June, as a precursor to the cameras, live radio broadcasts of regular proceedings were initiated. It took a few years of legislative maneuvering and a good deal of testing and study, but the details eventually were worked out and the TV system put into place.



The sometimes frenetic activity around the rostrum

The House broadcasting operation is run exclusively by House employees rather than commercial broadcasters. Six unattended cameras, controlled remotely from the basement of the Capitol, can offer up to 99 separate shots of the proceedings. From there, the signals are beamed across the nation using the latest technology.

The gavel-to-gavel proceedings are beamed to a satellite, hovering more than 22,300 miles above the equator, by the nonprofit Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network (C-SPAN). That signal, in turn, is beamed back to hundreds of cable television systems across the continent for distribution to their viewers.

Often, clips of important floor action are seen on local or national over-the-air TV news shows. Under rules approved by the House, the signal is available to any broadcaster or cable system live or on a taped basis. Members of Congress may purchase copies of tapes, provided the footage won't be used for political or commercial purposes. To help pinpoint a desired piece of footage, time cues, preceded by a box (□ 1315, for example, means 1:15 p.m.), are printed in the *Congressional Record*.

The success of the House broadcasting system has been studied and debated by the Senate, which began deliberation on its own bill in 1981. Both pro- and anti-broadcasting sentiments have run high in the Senate. Exactly when the cameras will be allowed to operate there is uncertain, but many believe it's only a matter of time. Even when the first Senator steps before the cameras, however, it will not mark the initial trial for television in that Chamber. In December 1974 Vice President Nelson Rockefeller took his oath of office on the Senate floor—the first and only time the eye of the TV camera has had an opportunity to eavesdrop on what many regard as the greatest deliberative body in the world.

IN CAMERA RANGE

The House of Representatives in Focus

From the moment the Speaker enters the House Chamber and approaches the rostrum, you'll be watching the sometimes deliberative, sometimes frenetic activities in the world's largest parliamentary room. To help you follow the action, here's a rundown of the key players—a sort of "Who's Who" on the House floor.

The **Speaker of the House**, as elected presiding officer, directs the day-to-day business on the floor: he recognizes Members who wish to speak, rules on questions of parliamentary procedure (which often are critical in determining the fate of a bill), and, from time to time, designates another Member to preside in his place (a Speaker pro tempore). He wields the gavel from a seat directly in front of the American flag.

The **Parliamentarian** advises the Speaker and other Members of the House on procedural questions, and only rarely is his counsel rejected. His seat on the rostrum is behind the Speaker's chair and to the left, directly below the large bronze scroll. (Note: Left-to-right descriptions are based on a head-on view of the rostrum and Chamber, as seen on the television screen.)

The **Sergeant at Arms** or his deputy, seated to the extreme left at a separate table, enforces the House rules of decorum in the Chamber when directed by the Speaker. He is custodian of the mace, the House's symbol of parliamentary power and authority. (During regular sessions, the mace rests on a tall green marble pedestal to the left of the Speaker's desk; when the House sits in the Committee of the Whole, however, the Sergeant at Arms moves the mace to a lower pedestal of white marble.) Beside him sits the Speaker's Page.

The **Clerk of the House** is the body's chief administrative and fiscal officer. He is in charge of taking all votes and certifying passage of bills, processing all legislation introduced after it has been referred to the Parliamentarian, and overseeing record-keeping for all House activities, including daily debates and floor proceedings. On ceremonial occasions, the Clerk occupies the seat to the right of the Speaker, directly underneath the other bronze scroll. At all other times the clerk to the Parliamentarian, who serves as Timekeeper, occupies that chair.

The **Documentarian Pages**, seated to the right of the Clerk, provide Members on the floor with copies of any material to be considered that day. Among other duties, they also operate the signal system of lights and bells that summons Members to the Chamber for votes or quorum calls.

Members of the Clerk's staff occupy the middle level of the three-tiered dais. On the extreme left is the **Journal Clerk**, who is responsible for maintaining the official record of House proceedings. Next is the **Tally Clerk**, who supervises all votes and quorum calls, relying most of the time on the House's electronic voting system (which he controls through a

10.1

computer terminal recessed in his area of the table). He also compiles the daily House Calendar and individual voting records of Members, and receives reports filed by House and conference committees.

If you watch the beginning of a day's session, you'll see the **Chaplain of the House** (or a visiting clergyman) offer a prayer from the Clerk's lectern in the center of the middle tier. Presidents use that same lectern when addressing joint sessions of Congress, but during routine House business, it most frequently is occupied by **Reading Clerks**, who read each item of business brought before the House. **Enrolling Clerks** prepare the word-for-word versions of bills that have been considered and passed by the House (committees prepare the original bill that comes to the floor).

The lowest level of the Speaker's rostrum is occupied by a changing cast of House employees who keep various official records. The seat at the extreme left is used by the **Bill Clerk**, who receives not only bills and resolutions being introduced, but also other items—lists of cosponsors, texts of amendments, and other material to be published in the *Congressional Record*. Members of the House drop these items into the "hopper," a brown wooden box about 15 inches long, 10 inches deep, and eight inches wide.

To the right of the lowest level are the **Official Reporters of Debates**, skilled stenographers whose verbatim notes are used to prepare the account of debates published in the *Congressional Record*. They are considered among the best in the world, working 15-minute shifts while moving about

In addition to political activities, the old Hall of Representatives, which preceded the present Chamber, was used for Sunday religious services, with the Speaker's desk being used as a pulpit.

the House floor—often only inches from the Member speaking at the moment.

In the center, **Clerks to the Official Reporters** compile a huge book that becomes part of the text of the *Congressional Record*. They assemble, by number, transcripts, texts of speeches, and all other material representing that day's proceedings.

You may also want to look for the **Timekeeper**, who usually occupies the formal seat of the Clerk (to the right of the Speaker). The Timekeeper watches, computes, and reports on time used during House activities—occasionally making sure "the gentleman from California," for example, who was granted one minute to speak, receives that time and no more. The **Doorkeeper** announces the arrival of official messages from the President and the Senate, and, during special events, escorts official visitors into the Chamber. The Doorkeeper also supervises the cloakrooms adjacent to the House Chamber, makes arrangements for joint sessions and meetings of Congress, and issues all guest passes to the galleries above the Chamber.

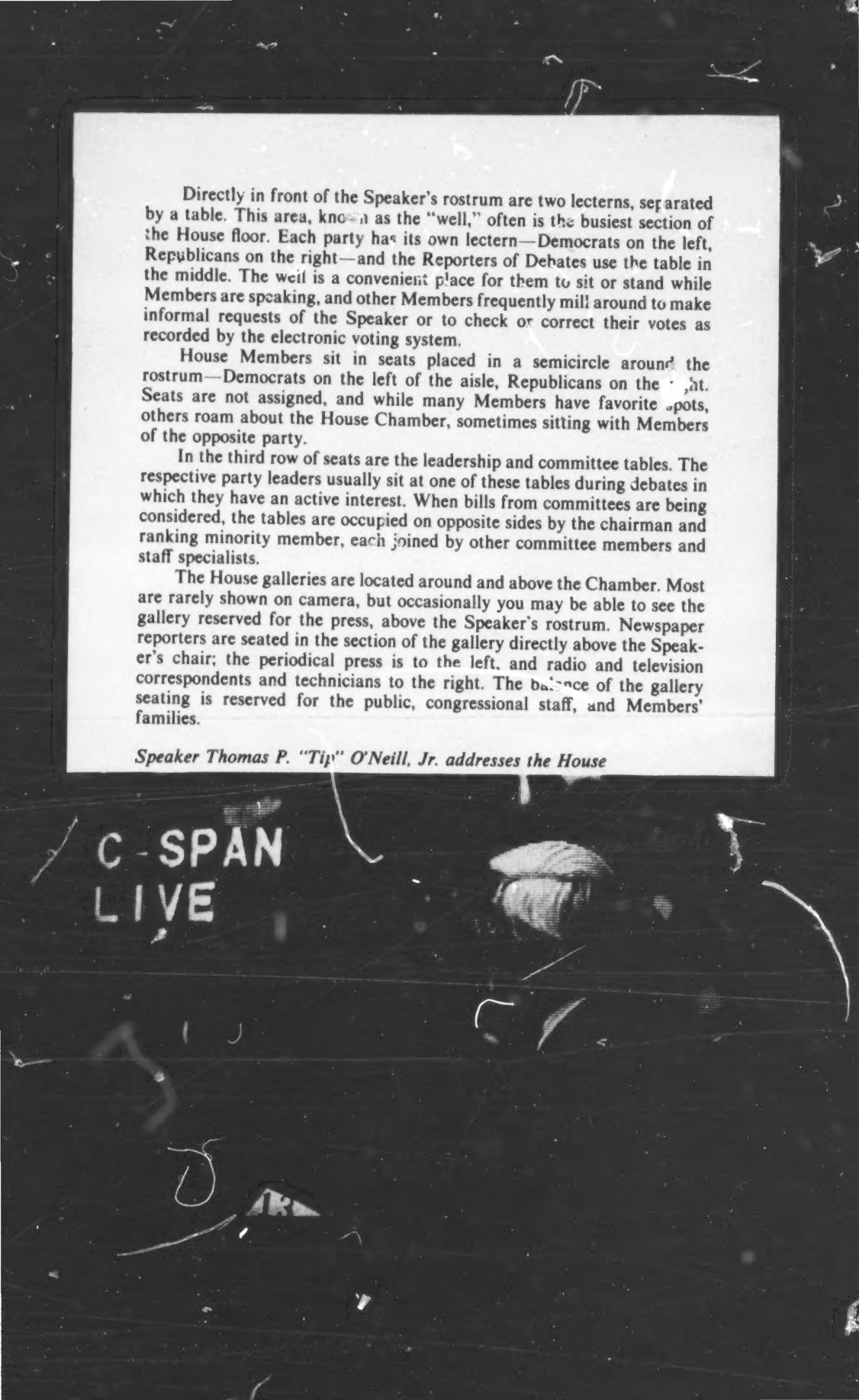
Directly in front of the Speaker's rostrum are two lecterns, separated by a table. This area, known as the "well," often is the busiest section of the House floor. Each party has its own lectern—Democrats on the left, Republicans on the right—and the Reporters of Debates use the table in the middle. The well is a convenient place for them to sit or stand while Members are speaking, and other Members frequently mill around to make informal requests of the Speaker or to check or correct their votes as recorded by the electronic voting system.

House Members sit in seats placed in a semicircle around the rostrum—Democrats on the left of the aisle, Republicans on the right. Seats are not assigned, and while many Members have favorite spots, others roam about the House Chamber, sometimes sitting with Members of the opposite party.

In the third row of seats are the leadership and committee tables. The respective party leaders usually sit at one of these tables during debates in which they have an active interest. When bills from committees are being considered, the tables are occupied on opposite sides by the chairman and ranking minority member, each joined by other committee members and staff specialists.

The House galleries are located around and above the Chamber. Most are rarely shown on camera, but occasionally you may be able to see the gallery reserved for the press, above the Speaker's rostrum. Newspaper reporters are seated in the section of the gallery directly above the Speaker's chair; the periodical press is to the left, and radio and television correspondents and technicians to the right. The balance of the gallery seating is reserved for the public, congressional staff, and Members' families.

Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, Jr. addresses the House



BEHIND THE SCENES

A Brief Tour Through the Halls of Congress

From a special control room within the Capitol, employees of the House recording studio operate the six color television cameras that capture action on the floor. By remote control, these technicians determine camera angles; adjust the sound, lights, and color of the broadcast image; and add brief captions. The cameras, placed at strategic points in the galleries above the floor, generally are directed at major points of activity below: the Speaker's rostrum, the majority and minority leadership tables, and so forth.

While the cameras "never blink," they do not cover a significant amount of informal legislative activity around the periphery of the House chamber and in the corridors and rooms adjoining it. Even though access to the House floor is tightly restricted, what you see on the TV screen during important debates may resemble controlled pandemonium. Here are a few pointers to help you keep track of what's going on:

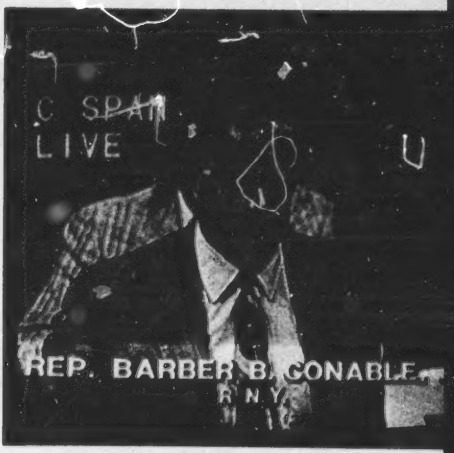
The young people in navy-blue suits rushing in and out of the House Chamber are official pages—high school juniors and seniors who deliver

Representative Carl Vinson of Georgia holds the House longevity record. He retired after 50 years, two months, and 13 days of service.

documents and messages, run errands for Members, and help out in various House offices. They wait for assignments, out of camera range, at desks in the rear corners of the Chamber (Democrats and Republicans each have their own set of pages).

Behind the railings at the rear of the Chamber are the Democratic and Republican cloakrooms. Here, Members may relax, have a snack, use the telephones, and prepare themselves for the time their bill or amendment will be brought up on the floor. One level up from the House floor are special lounges where they may read, chat with visitors or reporters, or look over and revise their remarks and galley proofs for the *Congressional Record.* Women serving in the House of Representatives have a special lounge (located between Statuary Hall and the Capitol Rotunda) complete with a few desks, kitchen facilities, and portraits of all women who have served in Congress.

The doorways at the left and right of the three-tiered dais lead to the Speaker's Lobby, a large, ornate room where Members may relax and chat with each other, or with staff members and reporters. The Speaker's Lobby



has newspapers and a wire-service ticker, but no cameras or recording devices are permitted inside (reporters, in fact, are prohibited from writing about any conversations overheard in this area). Here, Members also have easy access to a special library and reading rooms.

Members of the House and support personnel (stenographers, pages, employees of the Doorkeeper, and so forth) enter the floor from many different locations. Many already will be in the Speaker's Lobby or cloakrooms—just a few steps from the floor. Others will be arriving from the three major House office buildings—Rayburn, Longworth, and Cannon—and from other places within the Capitol itself. As a special system of bells (see box) alerts them to an impending quorum call or vote, many Members will be entering the floor from the far right or far left, corresponding to their party's side. Lobbyists and congressional staffers, cordoned off from the corridors, often wait outside the entrances to have a few words with Members on their way in.

Members cast their votes at any of the 44 voting stations attached to the backs of seats, or in the well by giving a signed card to the Tally Clerk, who enters the vote by using the console on the dais. (See page 27 of this booklet for an explanation of the electronic voting system.) A special video terminal and printer are located in the rear of the Chamber for Members interested in keeping tabs on various voting statistics.

The televised proceedings of the House are, in essence, an electronic extension of the galleries above the Chamber. Galleries are set aside for newspaper, periodical, and radio/television reporters; congressional staff; Members' families; and visitors to Congress. Only reporters are permitted to read, write, or talk with others in the galleries.

At some point, of course, you may wish to see congressional proceedings in person; in that case, you'll probably be watching from the visitors' gallery, after obtaining a special pass from your Representative or Senator.

THE SCHEDULE ON THE SCREEN

A Gavel-to-Gavel Guide to Order in the House

Although what happens on the House floor may at times seem haphazard—and is—the sequence of events for daily sessions follows an orderly pattern, in part prescribed by the rules of the House. The House generally convenes at noon, because committees and subcommittees meet in the morning, starting as early as 9:00 a.m. (some, like conference committees, often meet while the House is in session). Here is a brief "road map" to a typical day's activities:

Opening prayer. After the Speaker (or his designate, the Speaker pro tempore) brings the House to order, a prayer is delivered by the Chaplain or a visiting clergyman.

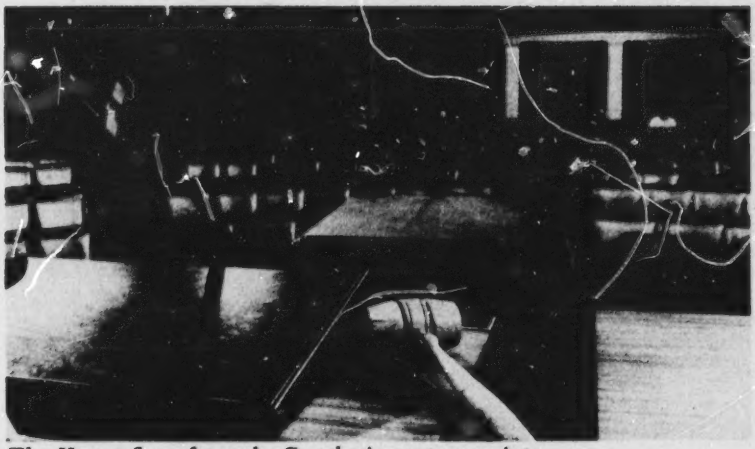
The Journal. The Journal, rather than the *Congressional Record,* is the official record of the proceedings of the House. At the beginning of each session, the Speaker simply announces his approval of the Journal of the

Henry Clay, at 34, was the youngest person to serve as Speaker. Sam Rayburn, at 79, was the oldest. James K. Polk of Tennessee was the only House Speaker to become President.

preceding day, in which case a Member may demand its reading or a vote on its approval. A Member also may object to the absence of a quorum, which generally leads to the first roll-call vote of the day on the Journal's approval.

Disposing of business on the Speaker's table. The Speaker may receive special messages from the President or the Senate, he may refer communications from heads of departments and agencies, and he may announce appointments he has made. The Doorkeeper of the House announces and escorts the messenger into the Chamber, the messenger bows to the chair, and announces the titles of messages he is delivering. Messages from the Senate might range from the designation of special observances—"National Peach Month" or "Afghanistan Day," for example—to votes on conference committee reports and vice presidential appointments. Later, the Speaker will refer these matters to the proper committee or hold them at the Speaker's table.

One-minute speeches. As a courtesy and tradition, the Speaker may



The House floor from the Speaker's vantage point

recognize Members to address the Chamber on any subject they wish for about one minute before consideration of regularly scheduled business. Members stand in the front row as they wait for recognition to deliver these "mini-speeches." During this period, Members also may ask permission to "revise and extend" their remarks and to insert various articles, speeches, and the like into the *Congressional Record.*

Unfinished business. On occasion, there may be unfinished business the House was considering when it last adjourned, or which was postponed from a previous day, that will be called up before proceeding with other scheduled matters.

Scheduled business of the day. With most of its traditional housekeeping activities completed, the House then will turn its attention to the scheduled business of the day. At this point, it's not unusual for a Member to ask a procedural question or note the absence of a quorum—if a vote has not already been taken—and absentee Members are alerted by the House bell system of an impending roll-call vote. (In the full House, 218 Members are needed for a quorum; while the House may proceed without establishing a quorum, it seldom does.)

Throughout the day, Members may interrupt the scheduled order of business by rising to ask that committees be allowed to meet while the House is in session (an objection by 10 Members, however, denies the request), to file or delay reports, to make one-minute speeches, or to ask other procedural questions. Such procedural questions often take precedence, because they must be decided before returning to the issue at hand.

Deliberations. The Speaker begins deliberation by recognizing a Member who will request legislative action on a scheduled matter, such as consideration of a bill, resolution, or conference report. Opening action may also take the form of a request for unanimous consent to discharge a committee (relieving it of jurisdiction over a matter), to consider a special rule from the Committee on Rules or a question of privilege, or to resolve

the House into the Committee of the Whole (a special process whereby all 435 Members become a "grand committee" for expediting consideration of an important bill).

Parliamentary procedure in the House requires three "readings" of a bill. The first occurs when a bill is introduced and the title printed in the *Congressional Record*. The second "reading" signifies the beginning of consideration on the floor, and may be a full reading of the text for amendment. The third "reading," usually limited to the title, follows complete action on all amendments.

The rule. Consideration of most major bills or resolutions on the House floor is subject to certain parliamentary requirements, the most important being adoption of a special rule that determines the amount of debate and what amendments and points of order will be in order. Sometimes a resolution establishing a special rule for debate may itself become the subject of heated disagreements—before the measure it permits ever is considered. During this process, points of order, quorum calls, and votes may be ordered before the House adopts a rule resolution governing floor consideration of a bill.

The Committee of the Whole. To speed up consideration of many bills and resolutions, the House frequently resorts to a parliamentary device that allows it to proceed with a quorum of only 100 rather than the customary majority (218). To consider all measures involving taxes or appropriations of money or property, the House must first resolve itself into

The first woman to preside over the House was Representative Alice M. Robertson of Oklahoma. When called to the Chair in July 1921, she was presented with the gavel by Speaker "Uncle Joe" Cannon.

the "Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union." If this motion is adopted, the Speaker steps down after appointing a Chairman to preside over the Committee. Essentially, the Chairman assumes the role of the Speaker, recognizing Members, controlling the debate, and ruling on points of order. (When the House sits in the Committee of the Whole, its mace is moved from a pedestal to the left of the Speaker's desk to a white marble pedestal below, a procedure viewers of the televised proceedings may find worth remembering.) At the conclusion of the consideration of a bill for amendment, the Committee of the Whole "rises" and reports the bill back to the House, along with any amendments.

Debate. The presiding officer of the House allows the principal advocates and opponents of a bill (the floor managers) a certain amount of time ("pursuant to the special rule") for general debate. These floor managers, often the chairman and ranking minority member of the committee or subcomittee reporting the bill, govern who is recognized and how time is allotted. By "yielding" to other Members, they allow supporters of their

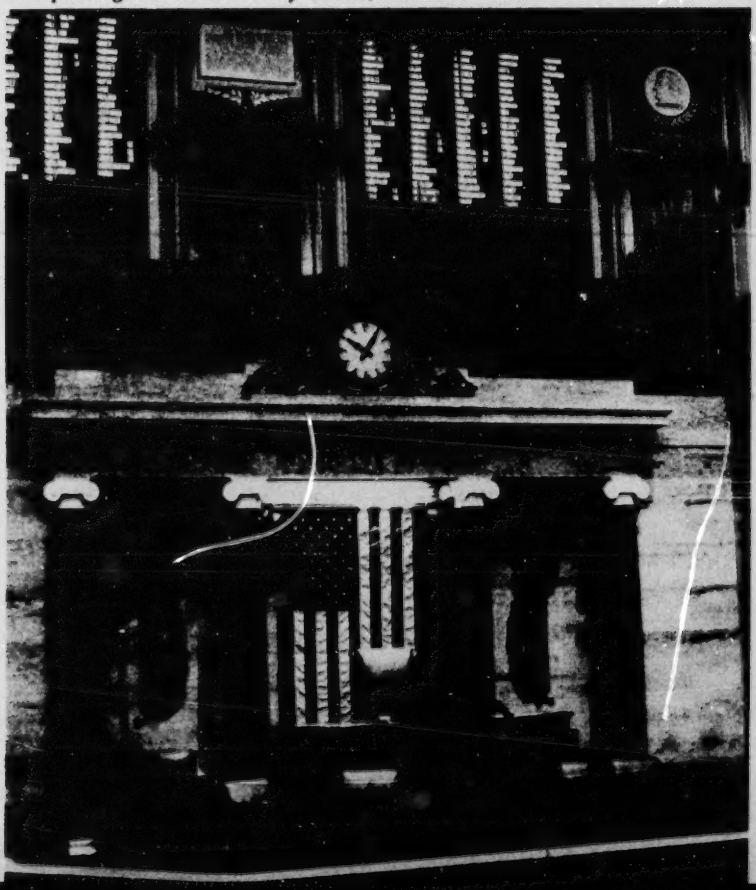
position to speak or make additional arguments.

During this general debate, and during subsequent debate on amendments, Members make supporting and opposing speeches, ask and answer questions, and challenge the positions of the other side—but always with a formal request for the "yielding" of time or right to the floor, and always with periodic reminders from the Timekeeper through the Chair. Members may either speak from the "well" or from their respective leadership tables.

Amendments. After the conclusion of general debate, the Clerk will read the bill for any amendments. Committee amendments to the pending section usually are considered and debated first. Then, any Member may offer amendments under the "five-minute rule," which allows each Member wishing to speak on either side of the issue five minutes of debate. The debate is governed by the presiding officer, who gives preference to members of the committee reporting the bill.

Members frequently will rise and move to "strike the last word." This is simply a formality that permits a Member to speak on an amendment

The press galleries and tally board, above the dais



AMENDMENTS AND SUBSTITUTES

The procedure followed in the House for amending a bill may at first appear complicated, particularly if a viewer tunes in during floor action, but it follows a specific routine. Up to four alternative amendments to a bill or resolution may be pending simultaneously, as follows: 1) the original amendment; 2) an amendment to the original amendment; 3) a substitute for the original amendment; and 4) an amendment to the substitute.

The order of voting is as follows: The first vote occurs on the amendment to the original amendment; next, the amendment to the substitute is voted on; the substitute as amended or not follows; and finally, a vote occurs on the original amendment as modified by its own amendment or substitute.

without offering any substantive changes. If the Member strays from the subject of the amendment, however, another Member may object.

Amendments are offered one at a time, but they may be modified while pending by other amendments or changed entirely by substitute. Even the substitute may be amended. While the entire process often seems confusing, pending amendments are voted on in order and in the same manner as a bill. Immediately after the Committee of the Whole rises after reading a bill for amendment, the Chairman (from the floor beside the rostrum) informs the Speaker of the Committee's action, and the Speaker repeats the information to the full House, which then proceeds to final disposition of the bill.

When consideration in the Committee of the Whole is completed, and after the previous question has been ordered, a Member (normally of the minority party) may offer a motion to recommit—to send the bill or joint resolution back to committee—and the Speaker is required to first recognize a minority Member opposing the legislation. The motion cannot be debated unless it involves instructions to the originating committee. In these cases, ten minutes of debate (divided equally between supporters and opponents) is allowed before the vote. If adopted, a "straight" motion to recommit has the effect of delaying, or killing, passage of the bill, because from a technical standpoint, it is sent back for further deliberations. But a motion to recommit with instructions to report back "forthwith with an amendment" merely permits one final amendment to the bill before passage.

The vote. When it comes time to vote on an amendment or on the bill itself, the Speaker first announces a voice vote and decides which side prevailed. After that, however, a Member from the losing side may ask for a division, a recorded vote, or yeas and nays (see page 28), or he may object to the vote on the grounds that a quorum was not present. If a recorded vote is ordered, Members will proceed to vote by machine, with the results tabulated electronically and displayed—in progress—on the tote board

behind the Speaker's rostrum. The Clerk of the House then announces the vote as well as any absent Members and "pairs." In essence, a "live" pair is a gentleman's agreement between two legislators on opposite sides of an issue in which one agrees to withhold his vote on roll call so that the absence of the other from Congress will not affect the outcome. More frequently, a pair involves two absent Members of opposing viewpoints.

After the House passes a bill, a pro forma motion to reconsider is automatically made and laid on the table as a way of forestalling this motion at a later date. The reason for this formality: Under House rules, a vote is not final and conclusive until there has been an opportunity to reconsider it.

General leave. Following most roll-call votes, the Member who has managed the bill on the floor often will ask unanimous consent of the House that Members have five legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the legislation just agreed to. This allows Members to insert related information in the *Congressional Record* without separately seeking approval.

Deliberation on the next issue. The number of bills or resolutions debated and voted upon changes sharply from day to day, depending on the

Laura Statler Kincheloe, a concert pianist and singer who was married to Representative David H. Kincheloe, a 16-year House veteran from Kentucky, once whistled "Dixie" before a joint session of Congress. President Harding was in the audience.

length of debates, the length of the session, and the press of other congressional business. One or more entire days may be devoted to highly controversial or complicated issues; on the other hand, a handful of bills or resolutions may be disposed of in a matter of minutes through unanimous consent of the House.

Before the House adjourns for the legislative day, a good bit of other routine business—announcements for the *Record,* special orders for the revision and extension of remarks, and notices about certain items of legislation—will be taken care of.

Adjournment. "Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn." That's the simple form in which the House ends its official business for the day, and any Member may offer the motion (by custom, it usually is offered by the Majority Leader or his designate). Because the daily adjournment targets are not binding, this motion may come at midafternoon, or sometimes deep into the evening. The House also may, without concurrence of the Senate, adjourn for more than three days to a day certain, or adjourn without fixing a time to meet again ("adjournment sine die"), as it does at the end of each session, for example.

THE LEGISLATIVE LABYRINTH

How A Bill Becomes Law

Before a bill ever reaches the House floor, it is put through a series of rigorous tests, each one of which may prove an insurmountable barrier. Written comments often are solicited and public hearings held, giving interested parties an opportunity to express opinions about provisions in the legislation. There are subcommittee and full committee votes, giving Members a chance to keep a bill from consideration by the full House. There is the matter of having a bill scheduled by the Rules Committee for debate on the House floor, which, depending on the House leadership's view of the measure, often means a dead end. And if a bill makes it that far in the process—and the vast majority of bills don't—there are intricate parliamentary procedures that opponents can use to prevent its consideration and passage.

It is, in short, a process rife with potential pitfalls, and final approval by the House in no way assures that a bill will be enacted into law, since

Until the 63rd Congress (1913-1915), Members of the House had individually assigned seats.

a similar process will have to be completed by the Senate. If the two Houses of Congress disagree over portions of the bill, it may be sent to a conference committee for compromise. So the action a viewer sees in the House Chamber is just one step in a long, exacting process that involves considerable time, energy, and expertise. But the televised action is, in many ways, the make-it-or-break-it point in the life of a bill, and it is at this juncture that the laws of the land are ultimately shaped. Here, then, is a look at how that entire process ordinarily unfolds.

Introduction and sponsorship. During each two-year session of Congress, our nation's legislators introduce thousands of new proposals that eventually may become law (the most common form of which is the bill). The idea for a bill may originate anywhere—with interest groups, corporations, labor unions, congressional committees, or even private citizens—although only Members of Congress, the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico, and Delegates from the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands may actually introduce legislation for formal consideration.

In recent history, the President and his administration have been responsible for the bulk of legislative proposals acted on by Congress. Each

year, for example, federal departments and agencies submit proposals based on the President's course for the country as outlined in his annual State of the Union message. In addition, the President each year transmits the proposed budget to Congress, which serves as the basis for several appropriations bills drafted by the House Committee on Appropriations.

No matter where the legislative proposals originate, though, they follow similar paths through Congress. After carefully hammering out specific legislative language, often with the assistance of the Legislative Counsel of the House, a Member will have the original bill typed on a special form, which includes the names of all Members who have signed on as co-sponsors. Then the bill is merely dropped in the hopper beside the House Clerk's desk.

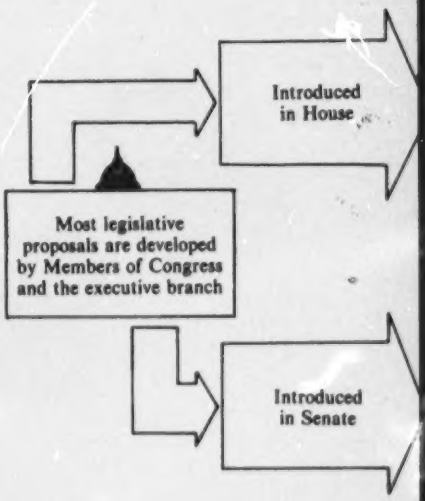
The bill's official title is subsequently entered in the Journal, and the Clerk assigns the bill its permanent legislative number—a label often referred to by Members during debate in lieu of the title. A bill originating in the House is designated by the letters "H.R." followed by the assigned number, while a Senate bill is designated by the letter "S." followed by its number.

The next day, the bill appears by title in the *Congressional Record*, along with the name of the committee or committees to which it has been referred—a determination made by the Speaker, with the assistance of the Parliamentarian. The bill is then sent to the Government Printing Office; shortly thereafter, printed copies are sent to the document rooms in the Capitol, where they are made available to Members' offices and the public.

The hopper, where a bill's journey begins

HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW

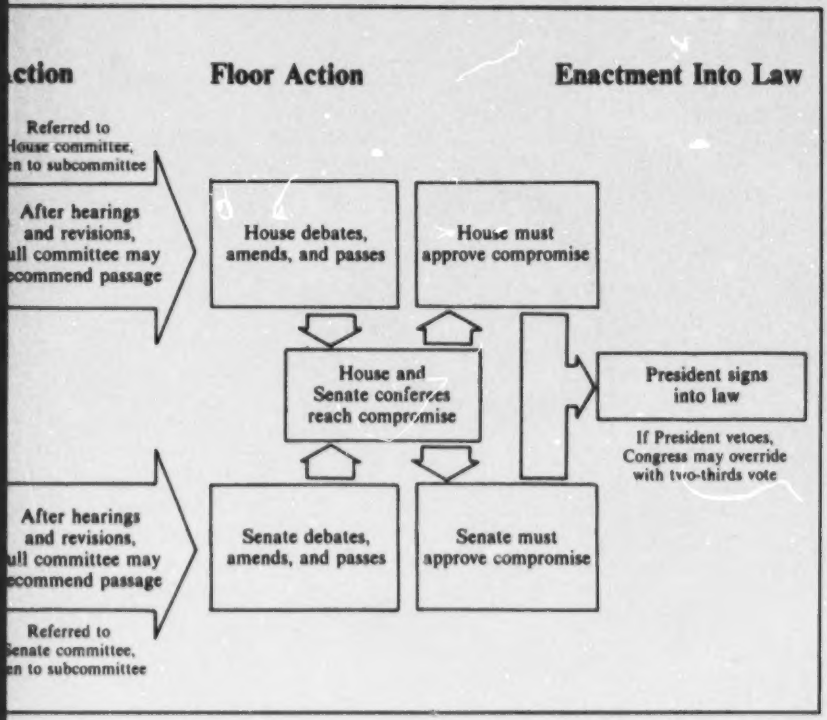
Here's a typical—but greatly simplified—"legislative road map" showing how bills are enacted into law. Most proposals, however, never make it through this legislative labyrinth. In the first session of the 97th Congress, for example, of 7,312 bills introduced in both Houses, only 157 became law.


Introduction
Committe
Introduced in House
Most legislative proposals are developed by Members of Congress and the executive branch
Introduced in Senate

In addition, a copy of the bill is sent to the committee to which it has been referred, where it is entered on the committee's Legislative Calendar.

Committee action. The committee system is, in effect, the backbone of Congress. It is in committees and subcommittees that bills are closely scrutinized and comments—both from the public and appropriate government agencies—solicited. (There now are 22 standing committees in the House and 15 in the Senate, as well as several select committees and standing joint committees.) It is here where Members with expertise or interest in a particular subject have an opportunity to advance, modify, or kill a pending piece of legislation. Committee and subcommittee chairmen wield great power. They can decide, for example, to do nothing with a bill, in which case it "dies" at the end of a Congress.

Bills are routinely referred to committees with the appropriate jurisdiction over the subject matter, and then routed to a subcommittee with an even narrower focus. A bill proposing to change licensing requirements for television stations, for example, would be referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and then sent to its Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Consumer Protection and Finance. Here real scrutiny of the bill begins.



The subcommittee staff sometimes solicits comments on the proposal from a wide range of experts: government agencies, affected industries, trade associations, citizen groups, and the like. If the subcommittee's chairman or its members believe the bill deserves an even closer look, and if time allows, public hearings on the bill will be scheduled. Once again, the subcommittee will listen to the views of interested parties—this time in a public forum, with Members given an opportunity to question witnesses. (A committee may go into executive session and close a hearing to the public, but this is usually done only when there is a threat of endangering national security or incriminating a witness.)

When hearings have been completed, a subcommittee will schedule a "mark-up" session to decide whether to move the bill along to the next step in the process: consideration by the full committee. At a mark-up, which also is usually open to the public, Members vote on whether to approve the bill as worded, amend it, rewrite it, or postpone action indefinitely.

If the bill is sent to the full committee, it may hold its own hearings, or it may proceed to a vote. The full committee often will review supporting material submitted by the subcommittee, and it may then choose to either table the bill or "report it" to the House, with or without amendments.

Since tabling a bill will ordinarily prevent further action, adverse reports by the full committee are usually considered unnecessary. Occasionally, however, a committee may report a bill unfavorably.

When a committee reports a bill favorably to the full House, it sends with it a written report describing the purpose of the bill, committee amendments, any minority views, the opinions of other government officials whose views had been solicited, and the committee's reasons for recommended approval. Consequently, these reports form a very important part of the legislative history of a bill, which assumes great significance when courts use it to interpret congressional intent. Like bills, reports are assigned a number, printed, and made available for congressional and public study.

Granting a rule. In large measure, the 16 Members of the House who sit on its powerful Rules Committee determine whether to permit consideration of a particular measure and then establish the parameters of debate before the bill reaches the floor. Because most controversial pieces of legislation are sent there, the Rules Committee often has been described as the "traffic cop" of the House. Following an open hearing (in which the merits of the bill are often discussed), the bill generally will be assigned a debate rule. That rule carefully outlines whether any amendments will be permitted, how long those amendments may be debated, and sometimes even the order in which they may be considered.

On October 17, 1940, four-month-old Robert J. Coar, Jr., whose father was superintendent of the House Radio Transcription Room, was christened in the well of the House. Following the ceremony, the House passed a rule that it could not be done again.

It is, without question, a complicated process—but an entirely necessary one in a legislative body with 435 Members. In fact, to keep track of all its pending business (before committees or either chamber), the House uses five legislative calendars. Under the calendar system, Members sponsoring legislation considered noncontroversial or bills dealing with private matters (claims against the government, immigration, land titles, and the like) may bypass the Rules Committee and gain floor consideration if they have been reported from the committee. Bills on the Consent Calendar normally are called on the first and third Mondays of each month; bills on the Private Calendar, the first and third Tuesdays. But if there are sufficient objections, the measure being considered will be postponed or taken off the calendar, and its backers will seek other methods of getting it to the floor. The two basic procedures are a "suspension of the rules" or a special order of the Rules Committee.

Suspension of the rules. While the term suggests some sort of parliamentary free-for-all, it actually embodies a new set of restrictions for consideration of legislation on the floor. It is a valuable way to expedite consideration of important—but not highly controversial—bills. A motion to suspend the rules is in order on every Monday and Tuesday and during the last six days of every session. Debate is limited to 40 minutes (20 minutes on each side of the issue), and no separate amendments from the floor are permitted. (Committee amendments, however, are often included in the motion, and two-thirds of those present must vote for passage.) If the bill fails, it may be considered later under special order procedures, usually the granting of a rule.

Special orders of the Rules Committee. In essence, the Rules Committee has three choices: it may send a bill to the floor under the normal "five-minute" rule; it may provide a special, more restricted rule; or, on occasion, it may decide to assign an "open rule" (one of the House's standing rules) to a bill, which allows unlimited germane floor amendments. If the committee provides a special "closed" or "partially closed" rule, and the resolution is adopted by the House, it becomes as valid as any open rule.

One other parliamentary matter of interest: If a rule is brought to the floor the same day it is reported by the Rules Committee, a two-thirds vote is required for consideration. More often, though, a rule "lies over" at least 24 hours, and only a majority vote is needed for adoption.

The resolution of disagreement over the rule paves the way for a bill to be brought for a vote on the floor. By the time of the final roll-call vote, many other issues—the rule itself, amendments, and even the manner of voting—will have been decided. The voting process has been greatly streamlined in recent years (see the following section for an explanation of the voting system and the types of votes viewers are likely to see), but many Members complain about what they view as an endless string of quorum calls and recorded votes on inconsequential matters.

Further action. Once a bill passes the House of Representatives, it is transmitted to the Senate in a rather formal ceremony (similar to the procedure under which the Speaker receives messages from the Senate or the President). There it follows a similarly labyrinthine path to final deliberations. Because of its smaller size, however, the Senate does not resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole; further, bills can be amended more liberally. And the Senate has no Rules Committee, nor does it normally limit floor debate.

A bill cannot become the law of the land until it has been approved in identical terms by both Houses. So if there are differences between House and Senate bills when the Senate completes its deliberations, the two bodies may seek to work them out in conference. Each body appoints conferees, usually drawn from the committees involved in the legislation. They meet and try to hammer out disagreements. If they are unable to do so, new conferees can be chosen in an attempt to break the deadlock. By instructing conferees to adhere to certain positions, either body may also convey the intensity of its views on a bill (the instructions, however, are not binding).

Once approved, the conference committee's report, which represents all amendments between the Houses on which the conferees could agree, is sent back to each House for consideration. House rules require that conference reports "lie over" at least three days to insure that Members have time to study them before they vote. The House generally permits one hour of floor debate on the conference report itself; if any amendments are considered separately, they must be sent back to the Senate for approval or further conference. Even if only one amendment remains in disagreement, the bill cannot pass until the House and Senate difference is resolved.

After the House and Senate have passed a bill in exactly the same language, it is enrolled on parchment and transmitted to the President for his signature. The President may approve the bill simply by signing it, or he may veto it. If Congress is in session and the President does not veto the measure within 10 days and return it with his objections, the Constitution provides that it become law anyway. If, however, Congress has adjourned sine die and the President fails to sign a bill, it is known as a "pocket veto." (In essence, Congress has prevented the bill's return by virtue of its adjournment.) If the President vetoes the bill, it is sent back to the House or Senate (whichever body originated the legislation) with a message explaining why. A vetoed bill is always privileged in the House, and generally must be voted on at once. A two-thirds affirmative vote in both the House and Senate is required to override a presidential veto.

FOR WHOM THE BELLS TOLL

On days Congress is in session, a system of electric lights and bells is used to inform Members of proceedings on the floor. The clocks in the House office buildings light up with the respective number of bell rings, signaling Members of impending votes or other legislative action. Signals include:

1 bell—teller vote (not a recorded vote).

1 long bell, pause, followed by 3 bells—the start or continuation of a notice quorum call.

1 long bell—termination of a notice quorum call.

2 bells—electronically recorded vote.

2 bells, pause, followed by 2 bells—a manual roll-call vote.

2 bells, pause, followed by 5 bells—first 15-minute vote in a series, where subsequent votes are to be five minutes in length.

3 bells—quorum call.

3 bells, pause, followed by 5 bells—quorum call in the Committee of the Whole, which may be immediately followed by a five-minute recorded vote.

4 bells—adjournment of the House.

5 bells—five-minute electronically recorded vote.

6 bells—recess of the House.

THE AYES HAVE IT

How Members of the House Vote

On January 23, 1973, the House of Representatives moved into the computer age. Before that date, tallying Members' positions on legislation was a time-consuming process, as roll-call votes—which required reading each representative's name aloud—took 30–40 minutes or so to complete. But with the introduction of a sophisticated computer system, the process was simplified and streamlined.

Voting, quite simply, is the process by which actions are completed in Congress. For a bill to become law, both Houses must vote affirmatively, followed, of course, by presidential approval. Parliamentary procedure allows for various types of votes, and a series of preliminary votes usually occurs before a measure is approved or rejected.

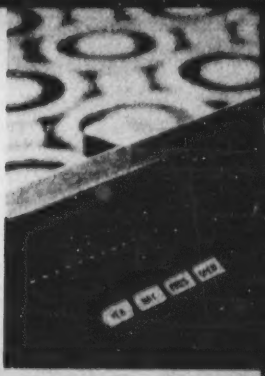
One common type of vote uses the electronic voting system—a process usually completed in 15 minutes. Each Member is issued a coded identification card—about the size of a credit card—that is placed into any of 44 voting stations around the Chamber when a vote has been ordered. A blue light signifies to Members that the station is available for use; when

Thomas Edison first suggested the idea of electronic voting for Congress in 1912, but it wasn't until January 1973 that the current electronic voting system was put into use.

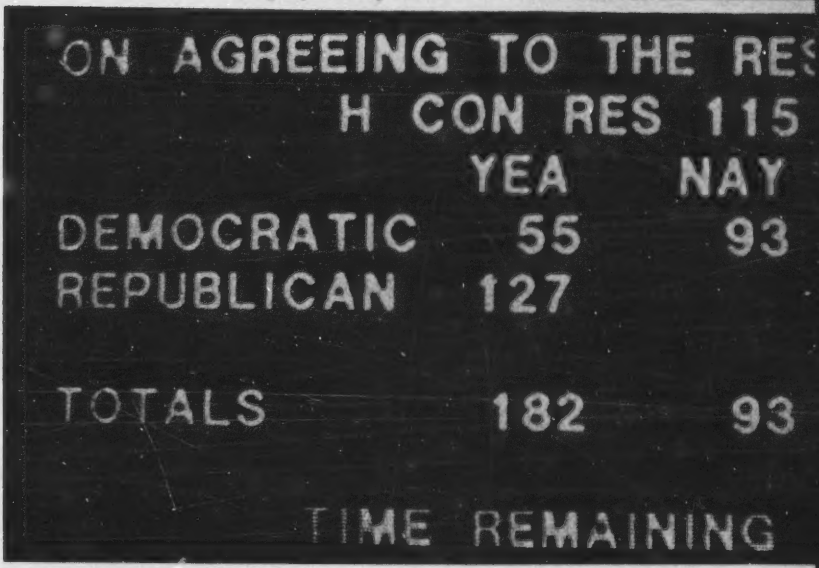
the card is inserted in the machine and the computer determines that it is valid, a Member then pushes the proper button—which lights up when depressed—to signify his intended vote: yea (green), nay (red), or present (amber).

To keep track of how the vote is proceeding, electronic scoreboards have been placed in strategic spots in the House Chamber. On each side of the Chamber, for example, display panels summarize the bill under consideration, the time left to vote, and a running tally of how Members have voted. In addition, four display panels, which include all House members, are located on the wall above and behind the Speaker's rostrum. When a Member casts his vote at a voting station, a corresponding light next to his name is illuminated.

Five video display consoles, which offer information and pertinent statistics about the vote, are also located in the Chamber. Two consoles, available for Members' use, are positioned in the rear of the Chamber; consoles are also found at the Majority and Minority Leaders' tables. The remaining console—the control console used to oversee the electronic vot-



As Members insert their plastic cards and register their votes in consoles around the House floor, a running tally of the electronic vote is displayed on your TV screen.



ing process—is at the Tally Clerk's desk. The actual computers recording and compiling the voting information are in the Rayburn House Office Building. Should one computer fail, a backup takes over and keeps the system operating.

Under House rules, Members may change their votes by reinserting their cards in any of the voting stations during the first 10 minutes of a 15-minute vote. In the last five minutes they must submit a tally card at the desk. Once a vote has been completed, the scoreboard lights are dimmed, the Clerk announces the results, and the House moves on to other business.

Here are the four types of votes used in the House:

Recorded Vote or Yea and Nay Vote. These roll-call votes, ordered by one-fifth of a quorum or of those present, respectively, require Members to vote yea, nay, or present. Although the Speaker may order that the roll be read, with Members responding in turn, the electronic voting system is used almost exclusively.

LUTION

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93

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156

3:59

97TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1805

To amend the copyright law, title 17 of the United States Code, to provide for royalties for the commercial use of sound recordings, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 6, 1981

Mr. DANIEL[S] himself, Mr. BRILLHART, Mr. BONIOR of Michigan, Mr. JOHN L. [illegible], Mrs. CHISHOLM, Mr. CLAY, Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DELLUMS, Mr. DIXON, Mr. FAUNTROY, Mr. FLORIO, Mr. FORD of Tennessee, Mr. GRAY, Mr. GORE, Mr. HAWKINS, Mr. HYDE, Mr. MCDADE, Mr. MINETA, Mr. MITCHELL of Maryland, Mr. MITCHELL of New York, Mr. MYERS, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. SOLARZ, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WEISS, Mr. WON PAT, Mr. YATES, and Mr. ZEFERETTI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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A BILL

To amend the copyright law, title 17 of the United States Code, to provide for royalties for the commercial use of sound recordings, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the "Commercial Use of Sound Recordings Amendment".

Voice Vote. This method of voting, used in both the House and Senate, does not rely on actual totals of pro or con votes. Instead, Members answer "aye" or "nay" in chorus, and the presiding officer decides the final outcome.

Standing Vote. If the result of a voice vote is uncertain, a standing vote (or "division vote") may be taken on demand of any Member. For a standing vote, the results of which also are not recorded, Members in favor of a proposal stand and are counted; then, Members opposed stand and are counted.

Teller Vote. In this method of voting, which generally has been replaced by the electronic voting system, Members walk up the center aisle past two "tellers," who keep count as the legislators pass. The ayes walk first past the tellers, followed by the nays. A teller vote can only be ordered upon demand of one-fifth of a quorum: 44 in the House, and 20 in the Committee of the Whole.

A POST-TV GUIDE

Where To Go for More Information

Watching the broadcast proceedings of Congress may be the purest form of educational television, but the education doesn't have to end after you've turned off the TV set. Something you see on the screen, in fact, may be the starting point for taking advantage of Capitol Hill's vast resources in providing information and assistance. Here are a few ways to follow up:

Congressional Record. Published every day Congress is in session, the *Congressional Record* is the official account of debate on the floor of both the House and Senate. That account, however, may sometimes differ from what you've seen on the screen, because Members of Congress are allowed to edit and revise their remarks before publication. Material inserted in the *Record* but not actually presented on the floor appears in smaller type; insertions of entire statements generally are marked by bullets (•). The *Record's* "Daily Digest" highlights both floor and committee actions, and lists committee meetings scheduled for the next day.

Most major libraries subscribe to the *Congressional Record.* Single copies may be obtained by sending a check or money order for $1 to: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

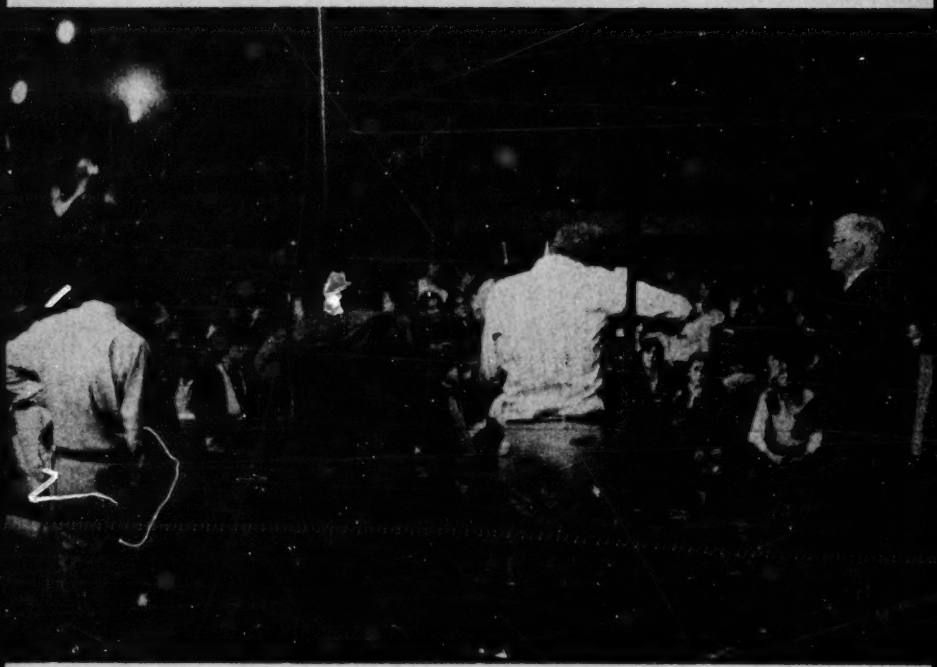
Twenty-three Presidents have had previous service in Congress: seven served in the House only, six in the Senate only, and 10 in both Houses. In addition, George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe served in the Continental Congress.

Congressional documents. For free copies of House and Senate documents—including bills, resolutions, presidential messages to Congress, most committee reports, and public laws—write:

House Document Room
H-226, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-3456

Senate Document Room
S-325, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 224-7860

You may wish to telephone first to check on availability. Hearings and other committee prints often may be obtained by writing directly to the proper House or Senate committee; once their supplies are exhausted, however, you may have to order them through the Government Printing Office (at the address above).



Status of legislation. For information on the status of legislation in either the House or Senate (whether there have been committee hearings, dates of upcoming hearings, the number of committee reports, and so forth), contact: Bill Status Office, H2-650 House Office Building Annex No. 2, Washington, D.C. 20515. Telephone: (202) 225-1772.

Floor action. In both the House and Senate, each party's cloakroom maintains recorded messages that give callers running accounts of what is happening (or has just happened) on the floor. Here are the cloakroom telephone numbers:

House: (202) 225-7400 (Democratic)
(202) 225-7430 (Republican)
Senate: (202) 224-8541 (Democratic)
(202) 224-8601 (Republican)

Members of Congress. Your Representative and Senators will be happy to provide you with similar information about pending legislation or other congressional matters in which you may be interested. Their office addresses are included in most issues of the *Congressional Record,* as well as in standard reference books like the *Congressional Directory, Congressional Staff Directory, Almanac of American Politics,* and *Politics in America.* The Capitol Hill switchboard, at (202) 224-3121, can connect you with the office of any Member of Congress, committee, or subcommittee.

READING GUIDE

Keeping Tabs on Capitol Hill

Congressional Picture Directory. This paperback guide is a useful companion for watching the televised proceedings of the House; it may help you identify Members milling about on the floor or waiting to speak. For information, write: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Congressional Directory. The *Congressional Directory* gives biographies of each Member of Congress, committee assignments, maps of the nation's 435 congressional districts, and much more—including a listing of all federal departments and agencies, with addresses, telephone numbers, and titles of officials. Senators and Representatives are listed by state, in alphabetical order by name, and by term of service. For information, write: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

The Almanac of American Politics and **Politics in America.** These reference books contain profiles of each Senator, Representative, and Governor, voting records on key issues, ratings by special interest groups, and in-depth analyses of each state and congressional district. Both books are available at most libraries and bookstores.

Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report. CQ's *Weekly Report* probably is the best running account of what goes on in Congress, and virtually every major library subscribes to it. If you're interested in a quick overview of an issue before Congress, or an individual's voting record, this is the place to start. The reference shelves of most libraries contain many of CQ's in-depth research reports on special subjects.

National Journal. This weekly periodical reports and analyzes important executive branch and congressional actions. Each issue highlights one or more major subjects. Many major libraries subscribe.

CIS Index. Since 1970, Congressional Information Service (a private research firm) has indexed summaries of hearings, reports, documents, committee prints, and other congressional publications. The information is arranged by committee. Indexes are by subject, name, witness, title, bill number, report and document numbers, and, in the annual volume, by the public law number. Many major libraries have the quarterly and annual volumes; some subscribe to CIS's weekly looseleaf service.

LEGISLATIVE LEXICON

A Glossary of Key Congressional Terms

(Part of the following material has been excerpted or adapted from the 1981 edition of the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac.*)

Act. The term for legislation that has passed both Houses of Congress and has been signed by the President or passed over his veto, thus becoming law. An act also is a bill or joint resolution passed by either House.

Adjournment Motion. A motion of the highest privilege, which is not debated, that allows each House to adjourn each day. To adjourn from day to day does not require a quorum, but to adjourn to a day certain does, if demanded.

Adjournment to a Day Certain. Adjournment under a motion or concurrent resolution which fixes the next time of the meeting. Neither House can adjourn for more than three days without the concurrence of the other. A session of Congress is not ended by adjournment to a day certain.

Adjournment Sine Die. Adjournment without definitely fixing a day for reconvening; literally, "adjournment without a day." Usually used to connote the final adjournment of a session of Congress. A new session usually begins on January 3 and can continue until noon, January 3, of the following year, but the convening date may be changed by majority vote of both Houses, enacted into law.

Amendment. Proposal of a Member to alter the language or stipulations in a bill or act. It is usually printed, debated, and voted on in the same manner as a bill.

Appropriation Bill. Grants the actual money usually approved by authorization bills, but not necessarily the total amount permissible. An appropriation bill originates in the House, and normally is not acted on until its authorization measure is enacted.

Authorization Bill. Authorizes a program, specifies its general aim and conduct, and, unless "open-ended," puts a ceiling on monies that can be used to finance it. Usually enacted before the related appropriation bill is passed.

Bills. Most legislative proposals before Congress are in the form of bills, and are designated as H.R. (House of Representatives) or S. (Senate) according to the House in which they originated and by a number assigned in the order in which they were introduced, from the begin-

ning of each two-year congressional term. "Public bills" deal with general questions, and become Public Laws if approved by Congress and signed by the President. Any number of Members may join in introducing a single bill. "Private bills," introduced with declining frequency in recent years, deal with individual matters such as claims against the government, immigration and naturalization cases, land titles, and the like, and become Private Laws if approved and signed.

By Request. A phrase used when a Senator or Representative introduces a bill at the request of an executive agency or private organization but does not necessarily endorse it.

Calendar. An agenda or list of pending business before committees or either chamber.

Call of the House. A procedure for bringing Members to the floor of the House. It is automatic when a vote is in process that requires a quorum, and a point of order is made to that effect.

Chamber. Meeting place for the total membership of either the House or the Senate, as distinguished from the respective committee rooms.

Conference. A meeting between committee members ("conferees") of the House and Senate to reconcile differences over provisions of a bill.

Congressional Record. The daily, printed account of proceedings in both the House and Senate Chambers.

Consent Calendar. Noncontroversial reported bills may be placed on the Consent Calendar and brought up on the first and third Mondays of each month in the House of Representatives. Objection by three or more Members will strike the bill from the Consent Calendar. A bill also may be passed over without prejudice to a later date. A bill killed on the consent calendar may still be brought to the floor under other procedures.

Discharge a Committee. Relieve a committee from jurisdiction over a measure before it that has not been reported.

Discharge Motion. A parliamentary procedure in the House that discharges a committee from considering a bill. If passed by a majority, the bill is brought to the floor for consideration without being reported by the committee. Alternatively, a discharge petition requires the signatures of 218 House Members.

Enacting Clause. A key phrase in bills saying, "Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives. . . ." A successful motion to strike the enacting clause from legislation kills the measure.

Engrossed Bill. The final copy of a bill as passed by one House, with the text

amended by floor action and certified to by the Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate.

Enrolled Bill. The final copy of a bill passed in identical form by both Houses. It is certified to by an officer of the House of origin (House Clerk or Senate Secretary) and then sent on for signatures of the House Speaker, the Senate President, and the President of the United States. An enrolled bill is printed on parchment.

Executive Session. A meeting of a Senate or a House committee (or, occasionally, of the entire membership) that only the group's members are privileged to attend. Frequently witnesses appear before committees meeting in executive session, and other Members of Congress may be invited, but the public and press are not allowed to attend.

Floor. The Chamber in which the House or the Senate meets.

Floor Manager. A Member, usually representing sponsors of a bill, who attempts to steer it through debate and revision to a final vote in the Chamber. Floor managers are frequently chairmen or ranking members of the committee that reported the bill. Managers are responsible for appointing the time granted supporters of the bill for debating it. The minority leader or the ranking minority member of the committee often apportions time for the opposition.

Germane. Pertaining to the subject matter of the measure at hand. All House amendments must be germane to the bill, and a non-germane amendment can be stricken with a point of order. The Senate requires that amendments be germane only when they are proposed to general appropriation bills, bills being considered under cloture, or, often, when proceeding under an agreement to limit debate.

House. The House of Representatives, as distinct from the Senate, although each body is a "House" of Congress.

House Calendar. A listing of public bills, other than appropriations or revenue measures, reported from committee and awaiting action by the House of Representatives.

Joint Meeting. A ceremonial occasion when both Houses of Congress recess and meet together, distinguished from a joint session in that business is not in order. Since only the President may address a joint session, other dignitaries, on ceremonial occasions such as State visits, may address a joint meeting of Congress.

Joint Session. An occasion upon which both Houses of Congress meet together for some purpose, such as an address by the President. During a joint session, conduct of congressional business would be in order.

Lame Duck Session. A session of Congress, called after a general congressional election, that includes Members who have been defeated.

Law. (see *Act*)

Legislative Day. The "day" extending from the time either House meets after an adjournment until the time it next adjourns. Because the House normally adjourns from day to day, legislative days and calendar days usually coincide. But in the Senate, a legislative day may, and frequently does, extend over several calendar days, where the Senate recesses from day to day.

Majority Leader. The chief strategist and floor spokesman for the party in nominal control in either chamber. He is elected by his party colleagues and is virtually program director for his chamber, because he usually speaks for its majority.

Majority Whip. In effect, the assistant majority leader in the House or Senate. His job is to help marshal majority forces in support of party strategy and legislation.

Marking Up a Bill. Going through a measure, in committee or subcommittee, section by section—revising language, penciling in new phrases by amendment, and so forth. If the bill is extensively revised, the new version may be introduced as a separate bill, with a new number.

Minority Leader. Floor leader for the minority party. (see *Majority Leader*)

Minority Whip. Performs duties of whip for the minority party. (see *Majority Whip*)

Motion. A request by a Member for any one of a wide variety of parliamentary actions. He "moves" for a certain procedure, or the consideration of a measure or a vote, for example. The precedence of motions, and whether they are debatable, is set forth in the House and Senate manuals.

Notice Quorum Call. In the Committee of the Whole, a notice quorum call may be ordered by the Chairman when the point of order is made that a quorum is not present. If 100 Members—who constitute a quorum in the Committee of the Whole—appear within the specified time period, the notice quorum call is not recorded. If 100 Members fail to appear, a regular quorum call, which is recorded, is made.

Override a Veto. If the President disapproves a bill and sends it back to Congress with his objections, Congress may override his veto by a two-thirds vote in each Chamber. The Constitution requires a yea and nay vote.

Parliamentarian. The rules expert charged with advising the presiding officer on questions of procedure.

Parliamentary Inquiry. A question from a Member to the chair seeking clarification on a procedural matter. A Member who holds the floor may yield for that purpose and the Chair will render an opinion.

Point of Order. An objection raised by a Member that the House is departing from the rules governing its conduct of business. The objector cites the rule violated, and the Chair sustains his objection if correctly made. Order is restored by the Chair's suspending proceedings until it conforms to the prescribed "order of business."

Previous Question. In this sense, a "question" is an "issue" before the House for a vote, and the issue is "previous" when some other topic has superceded it in the attention of the Chamber. A motion for the previous question, when carried, has the effect of cutting off all debate and amendments and forcing a vote on the subject originally at hand. If, however, the previous question is moved and carried before there has been any debate on the subject at hand, and the subject is debatable, 40 minutes of debate is allowed before the vote. The previous question is sometimes moved to prevent amendments from being introduced and voted on.

Private Calendar. Private House bills dealing with individual matters such as claims against the government, immigration, land titles, and the like are put on this calendar. Two Members may block consideration of a private bill in the Chamber. If blocked, it is then recommitted to committee.

Privileged Question. The order in which bills, motions, and other legislative measures are considered by Congress is governed by strict priorities. A motion to table, for instance, is more privileged than a motion to refer. Thus, a motion to recommit can be suspended by a motion to table, and a vote would be forced on the latter motion only. A motion to adjourn, however, would take precedence over this one, and is thus considered of the "highest privilege."

Questions of Privilege. These are matters affecting Members of Congress individually or collectively. Questions affecting the rights, safety, dignity, and integrity of proceedings of the House or Senate as a whole are questions of privilege of the House or Senate, as the case may be. Questions of "personal privilege" relate to individual Members of Congress. A Member's rising to a question of personal privilege is given precedence over almost all other proceedings. An annotation in the House rules points out that the privilege of the Member rests primarily on the Constitution, which gives him a conditional immunity from arrest and an unconditional freedom to speak in the House.

Quorum. The number of Members whose presence is necessary for the transaction of business. In the Senate and House, it is a majority of the membership (when there are no vacancies, 51 in the Senate and 218

in the House). A quorum is 100 in the Committee of the Whole House. Failure to achieve a quorum is cause for adjournment.

Recess. Unlike adjournment, a recess does not end a legislative day and therefore does not interfere with unfinished business. The rules in each House set forth certain matters to be taken up and disposed of at the beginning of each legislative day. The House usually adjourns from day to day. The Senate often recesses, so that a legislative day may encompass several calendar days.

Recommit to Committee. A simple motion, made on the floor after a bill has been debated, to return it to the committee that reported it. If approved, recommittal usually is considered a death blow.

Recommit to Committee with Instruction. A motion to recommit may include instructions to the committee to report the bill again with a specific amendment—which is the most common use of the motion—or to make a particular study, with no definite deadline for final action.

Reconsider a Vote. A motion to reconsider the vote by which an action was taken has, until it is disposed of, the effect of suspending the action. In the House it can be made only by a Member who voted on the prevailing side of the original question, and must be entered either on the same day or on the next succeeding day the House is in session.

Report. Both a verb and a noun, as a congressional term. A committee that has been examining a bill referred to it "reports" its findings and recommendations to the whole body when the committee returns the measure. The process is called "reporting" a bill.

A "report" is the document setting forth the committee's explanation of its action. House and Senate reports are numbered separately and are designated S. Rept. or H. Rept. Conference reports are numbered and designated in the same way as regular committee reports.

Most reports favor a bill's passage. Adverse reports are occasionally submitted, but more often, when a committee disapproves a bill, it simply fails to report it at all. When a committee report is not unanimous, the dissenting committee members may file a statement of their views, called minority views and referred to as a minority report. Sometimes a bill is reported without recommendation.

Reporting a Rule. (see *Rule*)

Resolutions. Simple resolutions, designated by H. Res. or S. Res., deal with matters entirely within the prerogatives of either the House or Senate, and require neither passage by the other chamber nor approval by the President. They do not have the force of law, and most deal with the rules of one House.

Concurrent resolutions, designated H. Con. Res. or S. Con. Res.,

must be passed by both Houses but do not require the signature of the President and do not have the force of law. They generally are used to make or amend rules applicable to both Houses (to fix the time for adjournment of a Congress, for example) or to express the sentiment of the two Houses.

Joint resolutions, designated H.J. Res. or S.J. Res., require the approval of both Houses and (with one exception) the signature of a President, and have the force of law if approved. There is no real difference between a bill and a joint resolution. Joint resolutions also are used to propose amendments to the Constitution, but do not require presidential signature; they become part of the Constitution when three-fourths of the states have ratified them.

Rule. The term has two specific congressional meanings. A rule may be a standing order governing the conduct of House or Senate business and listed in the Chamber's book of rules. The rules deal with duties of officers, order of business, admission to the floor, voting procedures, and so forth.

In the House, a rule also may be a decision made by its Rules Committee about the handling of a particular bill on the floor. The committee may determine under which standing rule a bill shall be considered, or it may provide a "special rule" in the form of a resolution. If the resolution is adopted by the House, the temporary rule becomes as valid as any standing rule.

A special rule sets the time limit on general debate. It may also waive points of order against provisions of the bill in question or against specified amendments intended to be proposed to the bill. It may even forbid all amendments or all amendments except, in some cases, those proposed by the legislative committee which handled the bill. In this instance it is known as a "closed" or "gag" rule—as opposed to an "open" rule, which puts no limitation on germane floor amendments. (see *Suspension of the Rules*)

Sergeant at Arms. The officer charged with maintaining order in the Chamber, under the direction of the Speaker or presiding officer.

Session. Each Congress is composed of two sessions. A new session of Congress begins each January 3 at noon and continues until adjourned "sine die." (see *Adjournment Sine Die*)

Speaker. The presiding officer of the House of Representatives, elected by its Members.

Special Session. A session of Congress after Congress has adjourned sine die. Special sessions are convened by the President of the United States under his constitutional powers. (see *Lame Duck Session*)

Strike Out the Last Word. A motion by which Members of the House are entitled to speak for five minutes on a measure then being debated in

the Chamber. A Member gains recognition by moving to strike out the last word of the amendment or section of the bill then under consideration—only a formality to address the House.

Substitute. An amendment, or sometimes the text of an entire bill introduced in place of the pending text. Passage of a substitute measure kills the original measure by replacing it. Under certain circumstances, a substitute may be amended.

Supplemental Appropriation. An appropriation to cover the difference between an agency's regular appropriation and the amount that becomes necessary for it to operate for the full fiscal year, because of new laws or obligations.

Suspension of the Rules. Often a time-saving procedure for passing bills in the House. The wording of the motion, which may be made by any Member recognized by the Speaker, is: "I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill. . . ." A favorable vote by two-thirds of those present is required for passage. Debate is limited to 40 minutes and no amendments from the floor are permitted. If a two-thirds favorable vote is not attained, the bill may be considered later under regular procedures. The suspension procedure is in order on the first and third Mondays and Tuesdays of each month and is usually reserved for noncontroversial bills.

Table a Bill. The motion to "lay on the table" is not debatable in either House, and is usually a method of making a final, adverse disposition of the matter. In the Senate, however, different language is sometimes used. The motion is worded to let a bill "lie on the table," perhaps for subsequent "picking up." This motion is more flexible, merely keeping the bill pending for later action, if desired.

Unanimous Consent Agreement. A procedure used frequently in both Houses to advance a proposition without resorting to the established rules of procedure. An objection thwarts the unanimous consent agreement.

Veto. Disapproval by the President of a bill or joint resolution, other than one proposing an amendment to the Constitution. When Congress is in session, the President must veto a bill within 10 days, excluding Sundays, after he has received it; otherwise it becomes law with or without his signature. When the President vetoes a bill, he returns it to the House of its origin with a message stating his objections. The veto then becomes a question of high privilege. (see *Override a Veto*)

Without Objection. (see *Unanimous Consent Agreement*)

AUTHOR ABSTRACT

The proceedings of the U.S. House of Representatives are transmitted via satellite and cable to over 10 million homes and schools. This 40-page booklet describes how the House conducts its business and, in particular, provides a useful viewers' guide to the televised proceedings. Gavel to Gavel is designed to improve viewers' understanding of the legislative process and to encourage active citizen participation in that process. The booklet contains information about what is taking place both on screen and behind the scenes, how a bill becomes law, how the voting system works, and how to decipher the special terminology of legislative debate. In addition, the booklet tells viewers how to follow up on what they have seen on television--how to get copies of bills or write to their Congressmen and Senators.

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